



WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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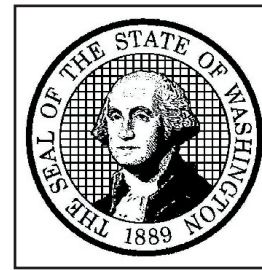
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For more information visit our Web Site
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To obtain this publication in an alternative format, please contact the headquarters office in Olympia.



WASHINGTON STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC) is to eliminate and prevent discrimination through the fair application of the law, the efficient use of resources, and the establishment of partnerships with the community.

The Washington Law Against Discrimination prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, creed/religion, familial status, marital status, national origin, race/color, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, HIV and Hepatitis C status, and whistleblower retaliation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Established in 1949, the WSHRC enforces the Law Against Discrimination (RCW 49.60), the law that protects all Washington residents from certain unfair and discriminatory practices. The WSHRC investigates and uses alternative dispute resolution in regards to complaints of discrimination in the following areas:*

	Employment	Housing	Public Accommodation	Credit	Insurance
Race/Color	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creed/Religion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Origin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sex	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sexual Orientation Gender Identity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status	✓	✓		✓	✓
Age (40+)	✓				
Retaliation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whistleblower Retaliation	✓				
Families with Children		✓			
HIV and Hepatitis C Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Not all bases are covered in all situations.

PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION

A proactive education and training program is a powerful tool in eliminating and preventing discrimination. The WSHRC conducts free educational seminars throughout the state on RCW 49.60. The WSHRC has two major audiences - the general public interested in understanding and protecting their rights and the “Respondent” community (e.g., employers, landlords, shop owners), interested in understanding and obeying the law. The WSHRC offers four core seminars:

Know Your Rights - Targeted at the general public, this is a basic overview of the Washington State Law Against Discrimination.

Basic Civil Rights for Employers - A basic overview of the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, with emphasis on how the law applies to employers.

Basic Housing Law - A basic overview of the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, with emphasis on real estate transactions. Specifically, the program covers the purchase and rental of housing for tenants, purchasers, managers and landowners.

Sexual Harassment Training - A basic overview of the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, with emphasis on identifying and preventing behaviors that could be considered sexual harassment.

For a schedule of courses, or to request a presentation for your group or organization, please refer to our web-site at www.hum.wa.gov, or call any one of the Commission offices listed on the back of this pamphlet. Courses can be modified to fit a particular group or situation.

ELIMINATING DISCRIMINATION

The primary function of the agency is to investigate allegations of discrimination. The WSHRC acts as a neutral law enforcement agency, representing neither the Complainant nor Respondent, but the law.

HOW TO FILE A COMPLAINT

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, contact the nearest WSHRC office. An Intake Investigator will review your situation and assist you in determining whether there is a basis for filing a complaint. Please inform the WSHRC if you need an interpreter or an accommodation due to a disability. It is important to remember that a complaint must be filed with the WSHRC within six months of the alleged discriminatory action(s) or event(s) and within one (1) year for cases alleging discrimination in housing. You can also submit a complaint online at www.hum.wa.gov.

AFTER A COMPLAINT IS FILED

Because the WSHRC is a neutral fact-finder, we do not take either side during an investigation. An investigator will be assigned to gather evidence to determine whether or not there is a reasonable cause to believe that a violation of law has occurred.

If the WSHRC finds that illegal discrimination has occurred, efforts are made to reach an acceptable agreement. If these efforts fail a reasonable cause finding will be entered and the complaint may then be considered for a formal public hearing before an Administrative Law Judge.

If you have further questions or need more information please visit our website at www.hum.wa.gov or call statewide toll-free 1-800-233-3247.